



The President's Daily Brief

December 23, 1976

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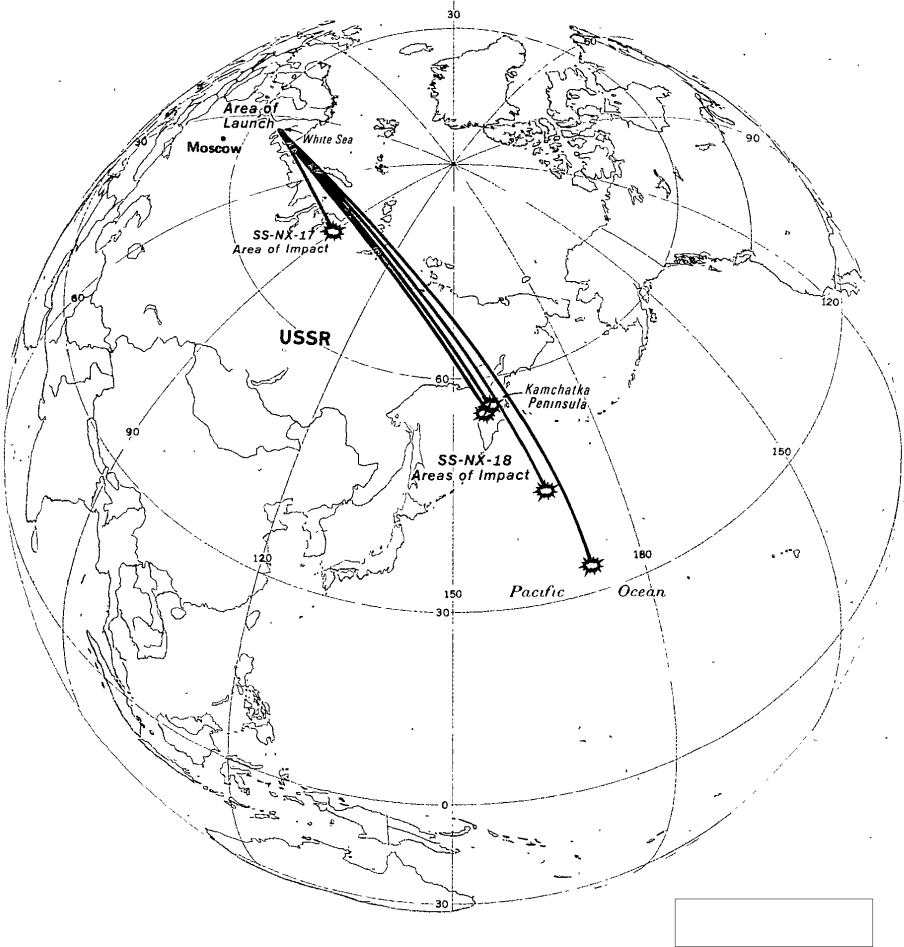
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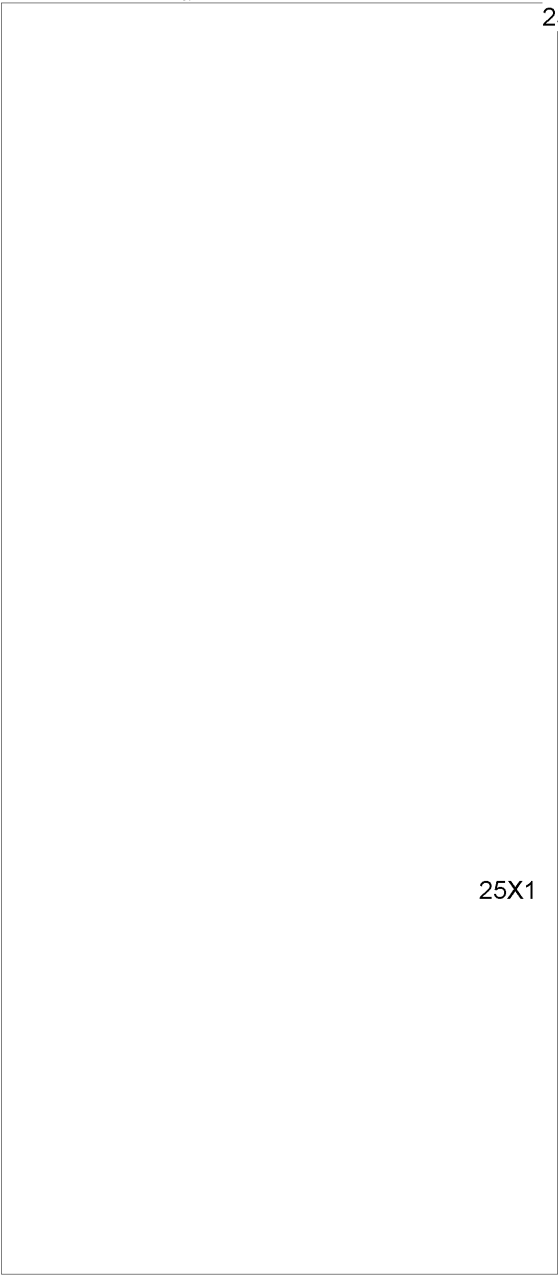


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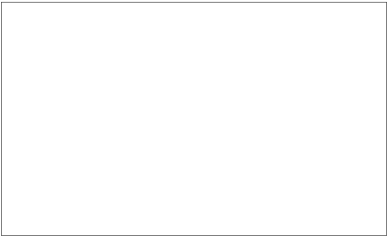
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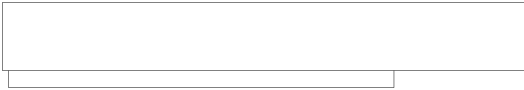
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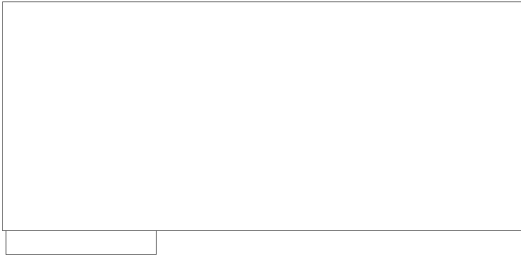
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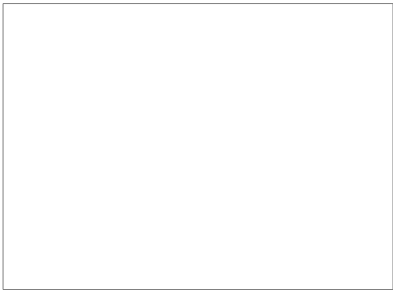
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NOTES

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Chinese Politburo member and Peking party boss Wu Te appears to be in serious political difficulty, probably because of his persistent criticism of ousted vice premier Teng Hsiao-ping.

Wu was the last senior official to call for criticism of Teng--in a speech at the end of November. Moreover, he has not appeared in public since December 9, and he was the only active Politburo member in Peking who failed to show up at two major economic meetings in the past week.

Wu is the highest ranking Chinese official so far caught up in Peking's attempts to rebuild a leadership that has been stripped by deaths and purges in the past year. His current problems are further evidence that uncertainty over Teng's future role is at the center of the current confusion in Peking.

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Recent satellite photography shows that the Chinese have launched three large naval support ships; all are in an advanced stage of fitting out and could be operational early next year.

The new ships are the largest in the Chinese navy and are the first to carry helicopters.

The largest of the three--photographed [] at a shipyard in the northeast--is a replenishment ship capable of refueling surface ships at sea and is the first ship in the Chinese navy to have such a capability.

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The other two support ships, seen at a Shanghai shipyard, appear to be designed to support submarines. If so, they would be the first large submarine-support ships in the Chinese navy.

The three ships should give the Chinese the capability to support warships and submarines at a considerable distance from coastal waters.

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RHODESIA

The focus of activity aimed at a Rhodesian settlement has shifted back to southern Africa after the adjournment of the Geneva conference last week. Little substantive progress was made during a month and a half of negotiations; the conference confirmed and reinforced the wide differences among the participants.

The British hope to reconvene the conference next month after a period of bilateral consultations. Most of the parties seem to believe that further talks are in their interest, but the time and place of the next round of bargaining are uncertain. In the interim, the four nationalist delegations and the Smith government's representatives are maneuvering to strengthen their positions.

The deep divisions among the nationalists remained largely unchanged during the negotiations, and were a major cause of delays at the conference. Despite efforts by the front-line African presidents to achieve a common nationalist position, the factions still do not agree on the shape of an interim government for Rhodesia.

Patriotic Front

The Patriotic Front, a loose alliance of the delegations led by Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe, was a major new element among the nationalists at Geneva.

Born out of mutual needs and mutual suspicions and viewed by its leaders as a temporary expedient, the Front survived and the two delegations maintained a common position during the conference. The Front may have enhanced the stature of its leaders by virtually dominating publicity on the nationalist side during much of the proceedings, and Nkomo and Mugabe are likely to continue their association for a while longer.

Nkomo's Zimbabwe African People's Union generally favors a more flexible approach toward settlement terms than does Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union. Nkomo apparently almost broke with Mugabe over the latter's intransigence on the question of

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an independence date for Rhodesia, but he probably believes he needs Mugabe for now because the alliance helps the ZAPU leader's image among militant Rhodesian blacks.

The numerical strength of ZAPU forces is far below that of ZANU. Although some limited military coordination is possible, a reintegration of their forces is unlikely. Tribal and personal rivalries run deep and have been further embittered this year by armed clashes between the two groups.

Neither Nkomo nor Mugabe is a military leader in his own right, and each sees the settlement talks as his best avenue to power in Rhodesia. Unlike Nkomo, however, Mugabe's position within his faction is shaky. Factional strife within ZANU remained beneath the surface in Geneva, but several groups apparently are still vying for control, and efforts to forge a new, stronger leadership appear to be making little progress. There were indications that Mugabe would have been more willing to compromise on settlement terms if he had not been under pressure from some ZANU military leaders to remain firm.

Some ZANU military leaders have indicated that they would like to see the settlement talks collapse, apparently because they believe a military victory over the Rhodesian army would increase their influence in a new black government. They may have been sobered recently by the poor performance of their forces and the success of the Rhodesian army in cross-border raids on their guerrilla camps in Mozambique.

The military leaders almost certainly cannot block a resumption of the negotiations. They are sure to continue their efforts to increase the military pressure against the Smith government during the current rainy season.

Rival Delegations

Ndabaningi Sithole, who disputes Mugabe's claim to the leadership of ZANU, led a rival delegation to the conference and may have strengthened his position somewhat.

Sithole, who founded ZANU in 1963, was written out of the faction's leadership last year by most of the other ZANU leaders. His claim was reinforced, however, by the insistence of the front-line presidents

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that he be invited to Geneva as the equal of the other delegation leaders, and by fighting in the guerrilla camps between his supporters and followers of Mugabe.

Sithole still appears the weakest of the four delegation leaders. He apparently has no direct access to the guerrillas and probably needs the talks to retain any hope of a leadership position in a black government. Sithole's position at Geneva could hurt him among his ZANU constituency, since he appeared more willing to compromise on settlement terms than Mugabe did.

If the nationalists associated with the Patriotic Front indeed strengthened their positions during the Geneva conference, it was probably at the expense of Bishop Abel Muzorewa, who leads the African National Council. At least two of Muzorewa's lieutenants apparently defected to Mugabe and Nkomo

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Muzorewa remains a factor to be reckoned with because of his impressive personal standing among Rhodesia's blacks. His proposal that a prime minister for the interim government be elected rather than appointed has little chance of acceptance by the other nationalists, but the bishop probably thinks it may be his only chance to become the first leader of a black government.

Muzorewa does not have any organized military support and, unlike Nkomo and the ZANU leaders, he lacks any strong backers among the front-line presidents. Leaders of the African National Council have conducted exploratory talks about cooperation with the other black delegations, but nothing has come of the talks. Muzorewa has also had some tentative contacts with members of the Rhodesian government, but he apparently realizes that any attempt to work out a separate deal with Prime Minister Smith would damage his standing among the blacks.

Front-Line Countries

Despite differences over tactics, the front-line countries will continue their efforts to bring black rule to Rhodesia.

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Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, and Botswana first began to work together for a peaceful settlement in 1974. Angola joined the group earlier this year, but its main concern has been with Namibia, and it has played a relatively minor role in the deliberations over Rhodesia.

The front-line presidents are expected to meet again before the talks reconvene--possibly before the end of the year--and also will be consulting with the nationalist leaders. The presidents probably will continue to urge the nationalists to agree among themselves on settlement terms, but they will also consider additional steps to strengthen the military effort against the Smith regime.

The presidents do not agree on which nationalist leader should head a new Rhodesian government, but they apparently are determined not to let this interfere with their joint efforts. The presidents might agree to back the Patriotic Front if the alliance manages to hold together and agrees on how to set up an interim government. Zambian President Kaunda has been the main supporter of Nkomo, while Mozambican President Machel prefers Mugabe and the ZANU military leaders. The presidents clearly are frustrated by the repeated failures of their attempts to bring unity to the nationalist movement, and they realize that despite Muzorewa's personal popularity, the Front commands at least the nominal loyalty of virtually all of the Rhodesian guerrillas.

Fear of a civil war like the one in Angola last year probably has been a major factor in the reluctance of the presidents to introduce substantial numbers of Cuban or other communist forces into the Rhodesia situation.

At their last meeting in November, the presidents agreed to seek increased military aid mainly from African nations, but decided that a larger role for the communist powers would only be a last resort. Kaunda, however, fears that the presidents soon will have no alternative but to ask for a greater communist presence.

The Rhodesian Government

Rhodesian Prime Minister Smith clearly wants the negotiations to continue, but he and the white community seem prepared

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to resist the demands of the nationalists for an immediate transfer of effective power under an interim government.

Smith and other government officials apparently still have hopes of arranging a separate deal which would exclude Mugabe and the ZANU military leaders. Past efforts to deal with Nkomo and Muzorewa have made little headway, however, and it is unlikely that any of the prominent nationalists will agree to settle with Smith.

Moderate blacks, including businessmen and tribal leaders, reportedly are organizing a new political party inside Rhodesia. Although they claim that the government has not encouraged their efforts, Smith probably will explore the possibility of reaching a settlement with the party if it gets off the ground.

The government believes its recent raids into Mozambique have been highly successful in disrupting guerrilla plans for an offensive in Rhodesia. Rhodesian officials realize that such raids help to improve white morale, which could suffer again if the fighting intensifies and there is no settlement in sight.

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